

Embassy Security and Enhancement Act of 2013

Sponsored by Congressman Eliot L. Engel

Overview:

The Accountability Review Board (ARB) led by Ambassador Pickering and Admiral Mullen investigated the September 11, 2012 attacks in Benghazi that led to the tragic deaths of four brave Americans in Benghazi. The Board, convened by Secretary Clinton, found serious faults at the State Department and recommended changes to improve the Department's security decision-making and the way in which it prepares its personnel to serve in dangerous locations.

The Embassy Security and Enhancement Act of 2013, based in part on the ARB's recommendations, is designed to reduce the threats faced by the men and women serving the United States around the world while recognizing that some risk is inherent in robust diplomatic and development efforts.

Purpose:

The Act would improve the overall approach the State Department takes in providing security at its facilities abroad through improved planning and sharpen the Department's focus on the diplomatic posts that face the highest threats.

Improves Diplomatic Security Planning

- Establishes working groups to ensure that new or reopening posts are provided the necessary security measures and funding.
- The State and Defense Departments are directed to jointly develop enhanced contingency plans, including the rapid deployment of military resources, at high-risk, high-threat posts.

Strengthens Physical Security and Personnel

- Speeds the building of new, more secure embassies and consulates by increased funding for the Capital Security Cost Sharing Program, which is an interagency construction fund.
- Improves the quality of local security guard forces by allowing the State Department to award contracts on the basis of "best value" rather than the lowest price.

Enhances Security Training

- Better prepares personnel to serve in the most dangerous locations by requiring security training, such as surveillance detection.
- Improves the decision-making of senior and mid-level officials through security management courses.
- Equips diplomatic security personnel with the necessary language skills to operate in high risk, high threat posts.

Increases Benefits for Family Members of Individuals Killed while on Duty

- Provides greater compensation to relatives of individuals who dies as a result of injuries while serving abroad.
- Creates new life insurance supplement for those personnel killed in terrorist attacks while they are on duty abroad.
- Extends both retrospective, including the 1998 Nairobi and the 1983 Beirut Embassy bombings, and prospective coverage to survivors of U.S. government employees killed in terrorist attacks.